

A pleasant place for environment-friendly employers

PLEASANTON

The city of Pleasanton has been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as one of 84 Bay Area employers that's doing a good job helping workers find alternatives to driving to work alone.

Pleasanton and six companies doing business in the city were named to the EPA's first "Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters" list. An EPA official presented awards at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

To make the list, employers had to offer to help workers pay for public transit or van pools, or offer a telecommuting program. Employers were also recognized for providing lockers and showers for bikers and walkers, incentives for living near work, or on-site services like child care.

As of Jan. 1, 2002, there were an estimated 57,803 jobs in Pleasanton. Most of those jobs are held by out-of-town residents, so programs that encourage people to carpool or take public transit can reduce congestion on city streets.

Pleasanton repealed its trip-reduction ordinance in 1997, after state legislation was passed prohibiting local agencies from imposing mandatory programs. Companies with 75 or more employees may enroll in the voluntary program that replaced it.

Although the number of companies participating in the program has declined from 26 two years ago to 15 this year, a survey of employees at the remaining companies showed fewer are driving alone.

A survey of 1,382 employees showed that just 74 percent drove

to work by themselves, compared to 83 percent in 1998. Although car pool and transit use remained fairly constant during that period, more workers seem to be biking, walking and telecommuting.

The survey found that only 31 percent of the workers lived in Pleasanton, Sunol or Livermore. Many more workers -- 43 percent -- lived 21 or more miles away from Pleasanton.

Twelve other cities made the "Best Workplaces" list, including San Ramon and Berkeley. The six Pleasanton businesses that made the list were ProBusiness Services of California, Paychex Inc., Penske Truck Leasing, PeopleSoft Inc., Hacienda Business Park Owners Association and California Indemnity Insurance.